

## Resume Writing 101:

# A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

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**A** resume, the one physical item you can leave with a professor, recruiter or company contact to make a lasting impression and provide critical, professional and contact information. Whether that impression is positive or negative depends on your knowledge and understanding of resumes.

There are several basic content items that should be covered in your resume: contact information, career aspirations, and professional and educational experiences. What you do with those three areas is what sets you apart from every other job seeker.

**Contact Information.** It should be easy for an employer to identify your name which means it needs to be at the top of the page. It is said that human resource professionals on average look at a resume for six seconds to determine if they are in the follow-up or decline category. Underneath or beside your name should be contact information.

As a college student that moves frequently, it may be important to put both a current and permanent address and phone number. If an employer keeps resumes for six months to a year, will they be able to reach you? Putting your parent's address may make contacting you in the future more likely.

Also, be sure that contact information you provide will allow you to be professional if contacted — keep that in mind if you provide a cell phone number. Will your voice-mail message portray a professional? Also, use professional looking e-mails — not *hotgirl@yahoo.com* or *bigstud@hotmail.com*.

**Career Aspirations.** A short and concise career objective allows you to communicate what your ideal job

would be in the future at first glance for the recruiter. This will help employers know if your goals and the company's position are a good match. If you are set on one position make that your objective. "I want a position that I can utilize my Agricultural Business degree by working as a commodity broker." Otherwise, less specific objectives give you a chance to be flexible. "I want to utilize my communication and organizational skills in an agriculture related career."

**Professional and Educational Experiences.** The order in which professional and education information is presented is dependant on the type of resume you have. However, putting education directly after the objective is most often advised for young professionals or recent graduates.

Employers, especially at career fairs, want to know three things right away — your name, career goal and degree. If those three things seem close to their ideal candidate they are likely to continue scanning your resume.

After listing your education, including study abroad experiences, be sure to include internships, organizations or scholarly opportunities that are relevant to the job you are seeking.

When describing your work experiences focus on results and actions you took at that workplace. Use action words, such as developed, managed, sold, etc. and measureables to highlight your accomplishments. "Surveyed 25 cooperatives throughout the Midwest to determine usage and satisfaction of x product and then analyzed and presented the results for strategic planning session."

There are two primary types of resumes, chronological and

functional. The majority of people utilize the chronological resume because of the ease of organization. The most recent internships or organizations are listed first followed by things that occurred at later dates. However, with a resume that utilizes the functional method, an older internship may appear before a more recent internship to highlight work experience that might better align with the job being sought.

For example, if you have an agricultural business degree and completed an internship in 2008 working on a farm and one in 2007 selling seed and your career goal is sales, you might want to list the seed sales internship first. Functional resumes may also place scholar activities or clubs and organizations before work experience. If your leadership outshines your work experiences, listing those experiences first is acceptable.

In either layout, your professional experiences and organizations are going to be the largest portion of your resume. Utilize the space you have with care. It has already been mentioned that an employer is going to scan a resume, therefore you need to make it easy to read and highlight things that set you apart from any other job seeker. Use bullets and short, descriptive sentences or phrases to provide relevant information about the experience. Be sure to use an easy-to-read font style and size, as well as use effective formatting throughout.

As always, the best advice is to edit multiple times and often. A resume should be tailored to each new opportunity you hope to experience. Each and every piece of the resume should highlight why you are the obvious candidate for the position. See the facing page for a resume of a job seeker extraordinaire!